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House of Representatives

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the energy legislation that we are debating on the House floor today.

As an energy scientist who spent nearly a decade working at one of the nation's premiere alternative energy research labs I understand the complex and challenging nature of moving toward sustainable energy sources. Having served in this body for more than six years, I understand the difficulties in balancing competing interests to obtain a policy that benefits the nation. Unfortunately, rather than providing a productive and clear vision that leads this nation towards energy independence, this bill subsidizes oil and gas companies and eases environmental regulations and fails to put the U.S. on the right path.

This legislation sets a dangerous precedent by allowing the destruction of one of our national treasures to extract a minimal amount of resources. The very essence of the Arctic Refuge is that it is a pristine and untouched ecosystem. This unique environment serves as a critical breeding or migratory habitat for over 200 species of animals including polar and grizzly bears, Arctic wolves, and endangered species like the shaggy musk ox. This legislation completely ignores the precious nature of this land and instead provides yet one more opportunity for oil and gas companies to expand their operations. If this legislation is approved all Americans will lose something special and irreplaceable.

There are some good points in this bill. It does authorize increases in research on efficiency and renewable energy in future years. And I would like to thank my colleagues for accepting my amendment for a study of fuel savings from information technology for transportation.

But the good points of the bill are far outweighed by the bad. Instead of investing in cleaner, long term solutions, this bill brushes aside our nation's future energy needs in order to provide nearly 8 billion of taxpayer dollars to the oil, gas and other traditional energy industries to promote short-term, polluting energy sources. These tax incentives should not be going to industries that are thriving, but should be used to invest in our future by increasing research funding for alternative energy sources such as wind energy, fuel cells and fusion.

Everyone knows that we have a serious energy problem in this country. Our dependence on foreign oil affects not only our economy but also our national security. We will never drill our way to independence domestically. Yet we have an energy bill that is stuck in the past that yet again seeks to drill a little deeper, in a few more places.

We need a responsible and sustainable approach to addressing our nation's energy needs. On behalf of the residents of the 12th District, I pledge to continue to work toward the development of a balanced, comprehensive energy plan—one that finds environmentally friendly, sustainable ways to decrease our dependence on foreign oil and slow the degradation of our planet.